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the matter. The mayor was happily married to an attractive wife, who dressed *po modata* (in the latest fashion) and kept her children so neat and proper that they contrasted vividly with the peasant urchins who ran up and down the unpaved streets.

The mayor was charged with maintaining law and order with the help of the *strazhar* (police officer), the field policeman, and the forest policeman. The second wandered from field to field to see that cattle did not stray unattended onto strips where there were growing crops; the forest policeman prevented the purloining of wood from the forest lands used by Dragalevtsy people. The mayor also acted as local justice of the peace, and was ex officio member of the school board, health board, and any other village organization he considered worthy of serious attention.

But the mayor, although he enjoyed the spotlight, had to share it with the village priest. For five centuries, while the Bulgarians were subject to the Turks, the priest was often the only person in a village with any formal education. He not only interpreted the laws of God, but the laws of man as well. The Bulgarian monks and priests helped keep the feeling of Bulgarian nationality alive during those dark days, and thereby eventually aided in the achievement of national independence in 1878 at the conclusion of the Russo-Turkish War. Since traditions die slowly in a Bulgarian village, the position of the priest is still very high, although few people attend religious services and fewer people observe the rather rigid fasts of the Eastern Orthodox Church. However, the priest is an essential officiant at christenings, weddings, and funerals. Without him the peasants have no way of meeting life's major crises.

Father Sava was the *sveshtennik* or priest in Dragalevtsy. He wore with dignity his long black gown and high brimless hat, his uncut red hair in a knot at the back of his head, and a long auburn beard. I never failed to marvel at his wide range of interests. One day we would poke around his beehives; the next day he would show me his favorite photographs and competently discuss the relative merits of American and German cameras. But it was after I learned of the man's romance that I began to see him in a clearer light. The young lady whom he wanted to marry was the daughter of a priest